

Recreation, Motorized Use, and Special Use Suitability Evaluations

Plan suitability determinations were initially drafted by the plan revision team and, over time, modified based on public review (e.g., comments on the 2009 working draft plan). The following provides the base direction and foundation for the suitability determinations in the proposed plan.

The team used the following references to guide the suitability determinations:

Forest Service (2008). RHWR (Recreation, Heritage and Wilderness Resources) Guidance for Plan Revisions Under the 2008 Planning Rule. TG-11B. December 2008. Washington D.C.

Forest Service (2009). Recreation, Heritage and Wilderness Resources (RHWR) input into Forest Land Management Planning 2008 Planning Rule A RHWR Technical Guide. TG-11A. Draft Copy 01/07/2009. Washington D.C.

Forest Service. (2010). Identification of Lands Suitable for Recreation Use – Southwestern Region (R3) Plan Revisions. Version 4.0 – April 2010. Southwestern Regional Office. Albuquerque, NM. <http://fsweb.r3.fs.fed.us/eap/nfma/tech-guides/index.shtml>

Recreation

The recreation suitability determinations focused on mechanized and nonmotorized travel. Motorized travel is discussed in the next section. The main criterion for suitability was the management area emphasis. Suitability determinations may also be found in Desired Conditions, Standards, and Guidelines sections throughout Chapter 2 of the Proposed Plan. Specifically, meadows and along stream bottoms were considered not suitable for mechanized travel (e.g., bicycles) because of the sensitive nature of these ecological features. Sacred sites, traditional cultural properties (TCPs), and areas with high concentrations of significant cultural sites were also considered not suitable because of the potential disturbance to these cultural resource values. Mechanized travel would also be excluded from wild segments of wild and scenic rivers consistent with FSH 1909.12, Chapter 82.5 (Interim Management of Eligible or Suitable Rivers).

Proposed Plan Direction

Mechanized travel is defined as movement using any contrivance over land, water, or air, having moving parts, that provides a mechanical advantage to the user and that is powered by a living or nonliving power source. This includes, but is not limited to, sailboats, hang gliders, parachutes, bicycles, game carriers, carts, and wagons. It does not include wheelchairs when used as necessary medical appliances. It also does not include skis, snowshoes, rafts, canoes, sleds, travois, or similar primitive devices without moving parts.

Nonmotorized travel (not including mechanized travel) is defined as movement not relying on machines that use a motor, engine, or other nonliving power source (e.g., walking, canoeing, horseback riding).

Suitability of mechanized and nonmotorized travel on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs

Management Area	Mechanized Travel		Nonmotorized Travel ¹	
	Suitable	Not Suitable	Suitable	Not Suitable
General Forest	X		X	
Community-Forest Intermix	X		X	
High Use Developed Recreation Area	X		X	
Energy Corridor	X		X	
Wild Horse Territory	X		X	
Wildlife Quiet Area	X		X	
Natural Landscape	X		X	
Recommended Research Natural Area		X	X	
Research Natural Area		X	X	
Primitive Area		X	X	
Recommended Wilderness	X		X	
Wilderness		X	X	
Other Areas				
Meadows and along stream bottoms		X	X	
Eligible or suitable wild and scenic river	X ²		X	

¹ Not including mechanized travel.

² Mechanized travel is not suitable in sections classified as wild.

Motorized Uses

The motorized uses suitability determinations focused on motorized travel; new motorized roads, trails, designated areas; and temporary roads. The main criterion for motorized travel suitability was the direction found in the Travel Management Rule (73 FR 74689). Another criterion for suitability for new roads, trails, and designated areas was the management area emphasis. Suitability determinations may also be found in Desired Conditions, Standards, and Guidelines sections throughout Chapter 2 of the Proposed Plan. Specifically, meadows and along stream bottoms were not suitable for new construction because of the sensitive nature of these ecological features. New designated areas would not be suitable in any wild and scenic river corridor and construction of new motorized roads and trails would not be suitable in wild segments/corridors of wild and scenic rivers consistent with FSH 1909.12, Chapter 82.5 (Interim Management of Eligible or Suitable Rivers). In order to protect cultural resources, sacred sites, traditional cultural properties, and areas with high concentrations of significant cultural sites were considered not suitable.

Proposed Plan Direction

Motorized travel is defined as movement using machines that use a motor, engine, or other nonliving power sources other than a vehicle operated on rails or a wheelchair or mobility device, including one that is battery powered, that is designed solely for the use by a mobility impaired person for locomotion and that is suitable for use in an indoor pedestrian area.

The proposed plan provides the framework to guide future changes to the transportation system. Once the final decision on this plan has been made, potential changes to the forests' transportation system will be evaluated under this framework and through implementation of the Travel Management Rule (73 FR 74689). Upon completion of travel management planning, the associated motor vehicle use map (MVUM) would be printed. The MVUM would display the roads, trails, and areas that are designated for motorized vehicle use. Use inconsistent with those designations, and inconsistent with this plan, would be prohibited.

Suitability of motorized travel on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs

Area	Motorized Travel	
	Suitable	Not Suitable
On NFS roads, NFS motorized trails, or designated motorized areas	X	
Off of NFS roads, NFS motorized trails, or designated motorized areas (unless exempted ¹)		X

¹ Per the Travel Management Rule (73 FR 74689), the following vehicles and uses are exempted: (a) aircraft; (b) watercraft; (c) over-snow vehicles; (d) limited administrative use by the Forest Service; (e) use of any fire, military, emergency, or law enforcement vehicle for emergency purposes; (f) authorized use of any combat or combat support vehicle for national defense purposes; (g) law enforcement response to violations of law, including pursuit; (h) motor vehicle use that is specifically authorized under a written authorization issued under Federal law or regulations; and (i) use of a road or trail that is authorized by a legally documented right-of-way held by a State, county, or other local public road authority.

The table below displays areas that are suitable and not suitable for future consideration of a new designated motorized area, NFS road, NFS motorized trail, or temporary road construction. A **designated motorized area** is one that has been designated for motor vehicle use. **NFS roads and trails** are roads and trails that the Forest Service determines are necessary for the protection, administration, and utilization of the National Forest System and the use and development of its resources. **NFS motorized trails** are divided into two categories—greater than 50 inches and less than 50 inches—to accommodate a variety of vehicles. **Temporary roads** are roads necessary for emergency operations or are authorized by contract, permit, lease, or other written authorization, and they are not a NFS road or trail and not included in a forest transportation atlas. Temporary roads are removed or rehabilitated following completion of the activity for which they were built.

Suitability for new designated motorized areas, NFS roads, NFS motorized trails, and temporary road construction on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs

Management Area	New Designated Motorized Area		NFS Road and NFS Motorized Trail > 50"		NFS Motorized Trail < 50"		Temporary Road	
	Suitable	Not Suitable	Suitable	Not Suitable	Suitable	Not Suitable	Suitable	Not Suitable

Management Area	New Designated Motorized Area		NFS Road and NFS Motorized Trail > 50"		NFS Motorized Trail < 50"		Temporary Road	
	Suitable	Not Suitable	Suitable	Not Suitable	Suitable	Not Suitable	Suitable	Not Suitable
General Forest	X		X		X		X	
Community-Forest Intermix	X		X		X		X	
High Use Developed Recreation Area		X	X		X		X	
Energy Corridor		X	X			X	X	
Wild Horse Territory	X		X		X		X	
Wildlife Quiet Area		X		X		X	X	
Natural Landscape		X		X		X	X	
Recommended Research Natural Area		X		X		X		X
Research Natural Area		X		X		X		X
Primitive Area		X		X		X		X
Recommended Wilderness		X		X		X		X
Wilderness		X		X		X		X
Other Areas								
Meadows and along stream bottoms		X		X		X		X
Eligible or suitable wild and scenic river		X	X ¹		X ¹		X ¹	
Areas with high concentration of significant archaeological or historic sites		X ²		X ³		X ³	X	

Management Area	New Designated Motorized Area		NFS Road and NFS Motorized Trail > 50"		NFS Motorized Trail < 50"		Temporary Road	
	Suitable	Not Suitable	Suitable	Not Suitable	Suitable	Not Suitable	Suitable	Not Suitable
Sacred sites or American Indian traditional cultural properties		X		X		X		X

¹ New NFS roads or NFS motorized trails are not suitable in sections classified as wild (FSH 1909.2 Chapter 82.51).

² New designated motorized areas are not suitable where site densities make data recovery economically infeasible; or areas with significant sites that include architecture or structures; or there is a high probability to disturb human remains.

³ Exemptions may be made where construction or rerouting of a NFS road or trail will protect and/or reduce impacts to cultural resource values.

Special Uses

The special uses suitability determinations focused on energy corridors, other energy developments, and communications sites. The main criterion for special uses suitability was the management area emphasis. Suitability determinations may also be found in Desired Conditions, Standards, and Guidelines sections throughout Chapter 2 of the Proposed Plan. Specifically, areas with high to very high scenic integrity were considered not suitable so that the scenic integrity would not be adversely affected. All wild and scenic river corridors would not be suitable for these special use developments, consistent with FSH 1909.12, Chapter 82.5 (Interim Management of Eligible or Suitable Rivers). In order to protect sacred sites and traditional cultural properties, these areas are considered not suitable for these special uses.

Proposed Plan Direction

The table below identifies select special use categories that are suitable or not suitable on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs. Energy corridors are linear strips of land identified for the present or future location of a utility right-of-way (e.g., above or below-ground electric transmission line, gas pipeline). **Other energy developments** include the infrastructure associated with the provision or transport of energy (e.g., dam, biomass power generation, wind turbines, solar panels). Communications sites are National Forest System lands used for telecommunications services as identified in appendix C of the proposed plan.

Suitability of select special uses on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs

Management Area	Energy Corridor		Other Energy Development		Communications Site	
	Suitable	Not Suitable	Suitable	Not Suitable	Suitable	Not Suitable
General Forest	X		X		X	
Community-Forest Intermix	X		X		X	
High Use Developed Recreation Area		X		X	X	
Energy Corridor	X		X		X	
Wild Horse Territory	X		X		X	
Wildlife Quiet Area		X ¹		X		X

Management Area	Energy Corridor		Other Energy Development		Communications Site	
	Suitable	Not Suitable	Suitable	Not Suitable	Suitable	Not Suitable
Natural Landscape		X		X		X
Recommended Research Natural Area		X		X		X
Research Natural Area		X		X		X
Primitive Area		X		X		X
Recommended Wilderness		X		X		X
Wilderness		X		X		X
Other Areas						
Areas with natural appearing landscapes where human activities do not stand out (high scenic integrity) or natural landscapes where generally only ecological changes occur (very high scenic integrity)		X		X		X
Eligible or suitable wild and scenic river		X		X		X
Sacred sites or American Indian traditional cultural properties		X		X		X

¹ Existing energy corridors that cross wildlife quiet areas are considered suitable.